

Wanderers Share A Six-Goal Thriller

BY 'NOVA'

Dulwich Hamlet 3, Wycombe Wanderers 3

WYCOMBE Wanderers have been accused of many failings—lack of finesse, wholehearted endeavour, power and speed—but one thing their fans cannot complain about is the number of goals scored.

In 21 Wycombe games this season 93 goals have been scored—49 by Wycombe and 44 by opponents—an average of more than four goals a game.

At Champion Hill on Saturday Wycombe featured in a six-goal thriller, their first Isthmian League draw since September 7, after an interesting and surprisingly well-fought game. It was surprising because on paper and judging from both teams' recent form there should have been little to enthuse over. Instead, spectators were treated to an all too rare exhibition of clean, open football which swung from end to end. It was not that the standard of football was much higher than in recent weeks but that the teams were fairly evenly matched. Both forward lines proved they could be dangerous against some often flimsy defensive play. It provided thrills galore for the fans.

Wycombe were perhaps unlucky not to win, for they fought back well after being two

goals down within 13 minutes, and most of the second half honours fell to them. Neither side could grumble at the result.

DULWICH LEAD

The imposing Dulwich ground, the wonderfully green pitch softened by earlier rain, and the watery sun made for ideal conditions, but for the first 20 minutes or so the Wanderers had other things on their minds.

In the very first minute live-wire centre-forward Steve Dunwoody let a centre slide off his head with an open goal at his mercy. But four minutes later right-winger Holland latched on to a long pass from the ever-green Reg Merritt and smacked it into the net while the Wanderers defence remained motionless. Inspired by this early success, Dulwich kept up the pressure and Dunwoody was unlucky when his shot beat Patrick but bounced off the inside of the post, along the goal-line and away.

But the centre-forward was not to be denied and in the 13th minute he brilliantly chipped a shot over the lunging hands of Patrick and the despairing head of Alistair Lewis.

After these early shocks Wycombe settled down in attack and after 26 minutes Paul Hodges initiated a move which ended with the left-winger heading in a cross from Worley. Ten minutes later Hodges again made the opening and Dave Bassett headed in his centre to equalise.

Of the two defences, Wycombe's looked the shakiest and before half-time Dulwich should have scored at least two more goals, through Joyce and Algar.

ATTACKING ROLE

But after the interval it was a different story. Peter Sewell took control over winger Terry Vail, and Lewis and Pete Roystone started to provide some cover for each other and the previously exposed Phil Patrick, Charlie Gale, although not back to his best, showed improved form, and George Pullin, deputising for the injured Dave Thomas, seemed to revel in the more attacking role he was allowed.

It was not until both sides escaped 'own goals' from dangerous back passes from the centre-halves that Wycombe took charge. Les Merrick, whose long legs and gangling runs brought visions of great things to come, sent the now much-respected Tony Horseman away—but Daryll pushed out his shot.

Then suddenly Dulwich attacked. Right-back Hammond hit a huge cross into the goalmouth and Dunwoody out-jumped both Patrick and Roystone to head into an empty net.

But instead of this being the start of a Wanderers slump it was the signal for some all-out attacking play and 11 minutes from time Merrick slipped effortlessly past three defenders and lobbed a perfect pass for Horseman to equalise.

In the final minutes Wycombe attacked almost incessantly, using the two wingers, Worley and Hodges, at every opportunity. It seemed as if the winner must come, but the nearest was when Merrick headed a corner against an upright.

Dulwich Hamlet—D. Daryll; J. Hammond, R. Merritt; J. Day, D. Joyce, G. Nash; T. Hollands, B. Smith, S. Dunwoody, A. Algar, T. Vail.

Wycombe—P. Patrick; P. Sewell, A. Lewis; G. Pullin, P. Roystone, C. Gale; L. Worley, L. Merrick, D. Bassett, T. Horseman, P. Hodges.